



November 2000

## **NOTICE TO USDA CANNED MEAT SUPPLIERS**

The Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) will, in the near future, issue Announcement LS-78 to purchase canned beef with juices, canned pork with juices, and canned luncheon meat. Purchases under Announcement LS-78 will be on a competitive bid basis and contractual and specification compliance will be determined by an audit-based Quality System Certification Program (QSCP). To be eligible to bid, Suppliers must be approved through an on-site Supplier Assessment and successfully complete all pre-award requirements.

An audit based QSCP will provide AMS with quality assurance equal to or greater than traditional certification programs and provide increased operational efficiencies and cost savings to suppliers. The cost savings are expected to result in lower overall product costs to AMS.

Manufacturers interested in becoming an approved supplier must submit the following for evaluation and approval:

- (1) For each item offered, 12 cans of product and the related Nutrition Facts panel that conforms to the attached Technical Data Supplement for Canned Meat Products (TDS-CM), dated November 2000; and
- (2) A written quality control program that addresses the contractor's quality assurance measures to ensure compliance with TDS-CM and a written description of their production process.

The canned meat samples and documentation must be sent to the attention of the Contracting Officer, Agricultural Marketing Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Room 2610-South Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250, for evaluation prior to bidding.

To become an approved supplier and be eligible to bid on the first Invitation, the two items listed above must be submitted not later than December 6, 2000. This will allow sufficient time to evaluate the product(s), the written quality control program, and production process, and conduct the required on-site supplier assessment.

The criteria for evaluation of the product sample is under the Quality Assurance section of TDS-CM dated November 2000. After the sample(s) and the above documents are evaluated, an AMS audit team will perform an in-plant assessment of the facilities, processes, and quality control program used to produce the canned meat sample(s). The assessment consists of an onsite pre-award audit to determine the supplier's ability to meet contractual requirements. The audit will include, but is not limited to, a thorough evaluation of the potential contractors' and subcontractors' facilities, equipment,

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procedures, and all referenced documents. Documentation must support the TDS-CM. A detailed review of purchasing, receiving, production, quality control, inventory, shipping records, complaint resolution processes, and interviews with management and production personnel will be conducted.

Following approval of the sample, production process, and the documented quality control program, along with submission of the Solicitation Mailing Request form (SF-129) and Appendix 1 to Announcement LS-78, the supplier will become an approved supplier and eligible to bid. The evaluation of the product sample(s), the applicable documentation, and the notification to supplier will take approximately five working days. A representative of the Meat Grading and Certification Branch will contact suppliers whose samples meet the applicable criteria to arrange an on-site supplier assessment audit. Suppliers are responsible for all costs associated with the pre-award assessment and subsequent audits. Please direct any questions regarding the canned meat program to Patricia Lewis of the Commodity Procurement Branch on (202) 720-2650.

/s/Robert L. Leverette

Acting Deputy Administrator  
Livestock and Seed Program